



## Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

— Making a positive difference through education and service —

August 27, 2008

TO: School Administrators  
Colleges of Education

FROM: Rusty Rosenkoetter, Coordinator  
Educator Certification

SUBJECT: Substitute Certification

When a person is hired by a school district to substitute teach, the district is required to verify that the applicant has completed at least 60 semester hours from an academic degree-granting institution which is contained within the U.S. Department of Education's *Directory of Post-Secondary Institutions* (no vocational or theological coursework). The certificate is a one-year license to teach for the period of August 1 to July 31.

The paper application is completed by the prospective substitute teacher and retained by the local district along with an original copy of the transcript(s). The local district then applies (online) to the Department for the certification. Applicants have their fingerprints captured by Integrated Biometric Technologies like all other school employees. Applicants may reapply through the original school district for another substitute certificate each following year.

Lately, we've been inundated by applications for previously employed substitutes from districts that were not the initiating/original district. That is, a person applied and was fingerprinted by District X and then was employed by District Y and District Z. The following year, the applicant goes to District Z first and applies for licensure. Then Districts X and Y apply for the same substitute license. Our computer system is not able to "recognize" that the applicant is working in all the same districts – only that District X did not apply first. As a result, the application is rejected for all three districts.

Applicant	District X – Initiating district	District Y	District Z	Result
John Doe	8/1/2005	8/2/2005	8/3/2005	Issued to X,Y, & Z
John Doe	8/7/2006	8/5/2006	8/1/2006	None issued – fingerprint requested at District Z
John Doe	8/1/2006	8/4/2006	Not requested	Issued to X & Y

The order of application is determined by the computer system. In order to NOT trigger a fingerprint, the request for continuing licensure must come from the "original," initiating district that employed the substitute.

We understand the frustration this may cause, and we regret the delays that may result. Applicants can either return to the original requesting district or they may be re-fingerprinted as a new hire at another district.

DESE has requested an appropriation to update our certification system; however, we do not anticipate a quick fix to this problem. We appreciate for your patience as we work with you in resolving any license issues.